(*c*) The grass lands adjoining forest reserves are unsuited for cardamom cultivation and are being taken up only for tea estates.

(*d*) The cultivation should not be discouraged merely because the ryots belong to British India. Travancoreans are also taking increasing interest in the cultivation.

(*e*) The revenue realised by allowing cardamom cultivation is considerable, while the forest revenue is insignificant.

In conclusion, he prayed that the recent order of Government contained in G. O. No. L. R. 9643/359 of 1909, dated the 22nd October 1920, prohibiting the further extension of cardamom cultivation within the Cardamom Hills Reserve might be cancelled, and, if that could not be done, that lands that had been applied for and already entered upon be exempted from the operation of the G. O.

Dewan's reply.—The question will be looked into again carefully.

(3) Salt.

22. Salt factories in Travancore: defects in the present administration and suggestions for remedying the same.

Mr. S. Subrahmanya Karayalar B. A. (Member, Shencottah Taluk) prefaced his representation with a comparison between the condition and working of the salt factories in the Tinnevelly District with those in Travancore. He said that in Tuticorin, the lowest density of the brine in the several springs was 10° and the highest 17°, whereas in South Travancore, the density ranged between 1° and 10° only, and that in consequence crystals were formed in the Tinnevelly factories even without condensers, while in Travancore condensers were absolutely necessary for preserving the purity of salt. In the Levanjapuram factory in the Tuticorin Circle which might be taken as a typical instance, the salt layer was 1 to 1½ inches thick on an average, while here, the thickness never exceeded more than ½ an inch; again one pan of an area of one cent yielded in Tuticorin 120 maunds of salt per annum on an average without condensers against only 30 maunds per annum in Travancore. Further, in Tinnevelly the hot season ordinarily continued for about 10 months *i. e.*, from January to October, while in Travancore, the season for scraping salt was for 6 months only and was divided into two portions known as the *Tai Pani and Purattasi Pani*, with heavy and frequent rains intervening, with the result that the salt pans were constantly drenched with fresh water and became marshy and unfit for manufacture. Another advantage the Tinnevelly factories had was that they were naturally situated 5 and 6 feet higher than the sea level, which greatly helped to heat the soil sooner and thereby raise the density of the brine. The Travancore factories on the other hand were situated 4 or 5 feet below the sea level and the major portion was formed by reclamations from the Manakudi lake whose water was ordinarily 4 to 5 feet on a higher level than that of the surface level of the factories. The natural lay of the Tuticorin factories was such that sea water could be taken into the ring channel all round the factories so as to prevent the effect of percolation of fresh water, and besides fresh water coming through the rivers and the surplus water of the paddy lands found their way directly into the sea without affecting the factories in any way. Here in Travancore, the fresh water flowing into the lake was at a standstill and could flow into the sea only when the bar was opened, and there was further heavy percolation of fresh water into the factories on account of the extension of the Kodayar channels which very seriously affected the brine in the inner reservoirs. Sometime breaches occurred on account of heavy floods to the great detriment of the licensees.

The Member then observed that until recently there were salt factories in five different centres in South Travancore *viz.*, Tamaracolam, Rajakamangalam, Colachel, Tattaripu Odai and Variyur. Of these the *Tattaripu Odai* all but died in its infancy, as it had to be abandoned as useless owing to the percolation of fresh

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water from three sides. *Variyur* was one of the oldest factories belonging to Government, but it had to be closed a year ago as it too became unfit for scraping salt owing to the percolation of fresh water. But although it was a small factory containing only 300 pans, it was a very good one being directly irrigated by sea water and it could easily be restored to sound condition, if a sufficient ring channel was constructed on all sides. The proposal of Government to register this factory in the name of Mr. Sivathanu Pillai was a good one as the perfection of the factory would be ensured in the hands of one individual rather than in those of several licensees.

Coming to *Colachel*, the Member observed that it was worked under the old system under which the Government did all the works in connection with the maintenance of the factory and the licensees delivered to Government the whole of the salt manufactured at a certain fixed rate. But as the Government failed to do the necessary preventive works in time, the whole of the factory was flooded with fresh water and in consequence there was no manufacture of salt at all during last year. The following were, in the opinion of the Member, the works necessary to improve the factory, *viz.*,

(1) The cutting of a ring channel along the northern and eastern sides of the factory to prevent the fresh water percolation of the Pamburi Voikal which flowed along the northern side.

(2) The acquisition of a plot of ground with a width of 10 to 12 feet for about a furlong and a half and the construction of a channel to admit the free flow of water from the above mentioned ring channel.

(3) The deepening of the bar, or, the construction of parapet wall on either side, to prevent silting up by sand.

The Member next referred to *Rajakamangalam*. This was another factory worked under the old system which was also affected by fresh water percolation as the result of the opening of irrigation channels up to its proximity. The following works were suggested in the interests of the factory, *viz.*,

(1) Cutting of a ring channel along the northern and eastern sides of the old allom so as to let out fresh water into the Panni Voikal by the eastern side of Mr. Ponniah Nadar's factory.

(2) Widening of the Panni Voikal below the bridge along the Nagercoil-Colachel road and the addition of a span to the bridge.

(3) The putting up of another bund in addition to the one now being put up at the bar, so as to restrain the fresh water mixing up with the brine, as it was being taken through the bar *via* the sluice newly constructed.

Lastly, in regard to the *Tamaracolam* factories, which were by far the most important of the factories in South Travancore, the Member observed that they were formed by reclamations from the Manakudi lake. After the opening of irrigation channels under the Kodayar project, the Pazhayar was carrying a large quantity of fresh water into the lake, and owing to the periodical rains, the strength of the brine was considerably reduced and the out-put of salt was comparatively very poor. It was therefore necessary that suitable measures should be taken for ensuring a good supply of brine and for providing protective works against fresh water percolation. In the opinion of the Member, the two dams above the lake *viz.*, the Mission dam and the Pillapathu dam, should be retained and not demolished, and the Mission dam which was in a dilapidated condition should be reconstructed with shutters to be opened during floods and with provision for diverting the water during the manufacturing season by means of a channel to be newly constructed. The Chief Engineer's proposal to divert the course of the river from the Mission dam by acquiring lands on the west bank of the river was detrimental to the factories on the western side of

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the lake. The Member also suggested that wet cultivation should not be allowed within a radius of half a mile.

He then offered a few suggestions for improving each of the existing alloms with a view to ensure a larger output of salt. In regard to the old allom, he said that it was being maintained by Government and the licensees delivered to Government all the salt manufactured by them at 3 annas per maund. As a matter of fact, no works worth mentioning were done by Government for the proper maintenance of the factory which was subject to heavy percolation of fresh water. The diversion of Karimpatukulam overflow and the blocking up of the breached portion of the mud fort near Andivilai were highly necessary to prevent the percolation of fresh water. The silt from the eastern side drain should also be removed. In regard to the Cape Comorin General Traffic Company's Factory and that of the Avathanials, the drain on the eastern side of those two factories should be widened and deepened so as to allow the free flow of fresh water towards the south into the lake. The Member next urged the necessity of diverting the Puthallom overflow now running into Mr. Krishnier's factory into the channel running from the Mission dam along the right bank of the river towards the south. There was a boat and brine channel from the lake to all the four factories, on the western side of the lake. That channel could be converted into an additional outer reservoir over and above the lake, if the mouth of the channel was provided with a shutter to be opened and closed when necessary like the one provided in the Thottapalli chira, and over it a small bridge connecting Mr. Krishnaier's factory and Mr. Karayalar's was also necessary. In the interests of the Puthallom and Mr. Karayalar's factory the boat channel north of the sulice of Puthallom should be closed and converted into a platform.

In regard to the system of administration of salt factories, the Member represented that they were at present in charge of an Assistant Excise Commissioner who controlled and perhaps determined the policy of Government, and as such that officer must be an expert in salt manufacture. Another suggestion made was the equalisation of the status of the licensees. The hard and fast rule that a definite quantity of salt should be delivered to Government irrespective of the actual quantity manufactured in a certain year should be abrogated, as it worked considerable hardship on those who had spent large sums of money for constructing the factories. His suggestion was that the licensees be permitted to deliver 1/4 or 1/5th or 1/6th of the total outturn of salt actually manufactured the rate being fixed according to their outlay in constructing the factories. Regarding the old allom and Puthallom, it was highly necessary that the licensees should be permitted to sell their salt on payment of duty, the Government of course taking a fixed portion as their *melvarom*. The Member also urged the necessity for an office building for the Assistant Excise Commissioner and his staff, for giving increased pay to the members of the Excise department in charge of the salt factories and the inadvisability of making frequent transfers. He further deprecated the practice of allowing Excise peons to continue in the salt factories for a period of more than six months as it was a source of mischief and loss to the licensees. He was not however in favour of the separation of the Salt department from the Excise department. In the matter of weighment and storage of salt, the Member submitted that the licensees were subjected to a good deal of loss and that the present system was prejudicial to the interests of Government, the public and the licensees. He therefore proposed a modification of the Salt Rules and the adoption of the system of storage that was in existence before the passing of the new Rules. He further requested that the licensees, having vested financial interests in the factories, should be permitted to visit the factories whenever they thought it necessary and should not be prohibited from entering the factories in the night if their interests demanded it.

In conclusion, the Member urged, in view to the proper development of the salt industry, the deputation of an Executive Engineer from the P. W. D. to investigate the requirement of each of the factories above mentioned and to execute the necessary works.

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Dewan's reply.—I must thank Mr. Karayalar for the comprehensive survey he has made of the work of the Salt department and for the various suggestions he has offered. All these suggestions will receive the consideration of Government. No department is stationary. Every department must be moving in order to be progressive and suggestions will always be thankfully received. A gentleman that makes a special study of one department is often apt to ignore the interests of other departments and forget that in giving a final decision Government will have to consider a number of interests. Mr. Karayalar has criticised the Chief Engineer's proposals in regard to the discharge of flood waters. The Chief Engineer is an expert officer, and his opinion cannot be lightly brushed aside. He has also made certain sweeping recommendations such as the prohibition of wet cultivation within a half mile belt from the salt factory. What that prohibition would mean by way of loss to Government and the ryots will have to be considered. I mention these things just to show that the interests of one department cannot alone be considered.

(4) Excise & Customs.

23. Necessity for introducing the sweet toddy system.

Mr. Avira Mathai (Member, Muvattupuzha Taluk) said that before the introduction of foreign sugar, it was the sago palm jaggery they were using in large quantities in the north and that on account of the present high cost of sugar there was considerable demand for jaggery, but the supply was getting very scanty, mainly owing to the rules prohibiting the making of sweety toddy without a license except in the taluks of the Padmanabhapuram Division and in Neyyattinkara and Shencottah. Though the license was free, the number of persons allowed to enjoy the privilege of tapping for sweet toddy was very small, and even that number was decreasing every year with the result that the jaggery industry was fast dying out. In the taluks of Muvattupuzha, Todupuzha and Minachil it was not common to tap the cocoanut and palmyra trees as there were many sago palms. The fear of Government that sweet toddy would be fermented and converted into toddy was baseless as the people used fermented toddy directly much more than sweet toddy indirectly. Further, there was the preventive staff of the Excise department for the detection and bringing to book of cases of unlawful distillation or consumption. In the Southern Division, the palmyra trees were useful to the people in many ways and they were free to make jaggery and fermented toddy, but the sago palm was useless, if it was not tapped for toddy, whether sweet or fermented, and on account of the prohibitive rate of tree-tax, only a limited number of these trees were used for tapping. The Member was of opinion that if jaggery making was made as attractive and profitable in the northern taluks as it was in the southern taluks, illicit distillation would altogether vanish, and that since sugar could be made out of sweet toddy and jaggery, it would go a great way to the economic and industrial development of the country. The Member therefore prayed that the restrictions against the manufacture of sweet toddy be removed and the conditions be made the same both in the northern and southern taluks of the State.

Dewan's reply.—The matter will be examined.

24. Trade and certain suggestions for improving it.

Mr. K. M. Sivathanu Chettiyar (Member, Trading Classes, Kottar) observed with gratification that the State was progressing in every respect. But people generally forgot that progressive administration meant increased expenditure and, with the instances before them of the recent increase of process fees, value of copying paper and Anchal charges consequent on the reorganisation of the Judicial and Anchal departments, they feared that the Government proposed to impose additional taxation to meet the additional expenditure that had to be incurred to carry out the various reforms that were necessary to bring the State in line with the other progressive administrations of the world. The Member admitted the necessity for the reforms and would therefore suggest means for developing the revenue without taxing the people who were already in poor circumstances. In his opinion, the encouragement of the cultivation of tobacco in the State would be one way of increasing the revenue and at the same time improving the economic condition of the people. Tobacco to the

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